

D R A F T

8 Dec 58

25X1A



It has been reported to me that both Air Force and our own interest in the security aspects of the WS-117L program have resulted in an improved situation and a general tightening up. However, in this connection, articles which appear in news media referring to WS-117L cause me continuing concern. While I recognize that we are not responsible for nor can we control the skillful, speculative probing of good technical reporters, we must nevertheless do our very best to prevent the exposure of the highly sensitive projects in which we are engaged. In this connection, one of the most alarming aspects is the frequency with which speculation appears relative to "Sky Spies." Since it has now been released openly that the Thor boosted portion of our program (now called DISCOVERER) is oriented to serve other valid objectives, it appears that our security problem can be divided into two portions which may make their solution somewhat easier.

equipment of worthwhile resolving power, within required weight and space limitations, which will produce results of significant value in the time period we both have in mind.

We have, therefore, discouraged the specific proposals that have come our way and request that you do the same. An added reason for this kind of action (which, of course, we cannot use when talking to those making such proposals) is that the complication of a reconnaissance mission added to the already sensitive nature of some of the Thor-boosted shots could cause unsolvable complications.

We would, of course, be interested in hearing from you on an informal basis as to your evaluation of the feasibility of any such proposals if they seem applicable in the years to come.

D R A F T

8 Dec 58

Ltr fr Gen Schriever to 25X1A

This responds to your letter of _____ (date), concerning
photographic reconnaissance proposals.

As you are aware we made a fairly extensive study of the general
requirement for an early satellite reconnaissance capability and
of the technical possibility of meeting the necessary users requirements,
and that as a result the Thor reconnaissance program was cancelled.

We similarly have been approached recently by individuals,
possibly from the same sources, who have advanced ideas similar to
the ones you mentioned in your letter. As a result we have caused
a quick re-assessment of the situation to be made by a very highly
qualified ad hoc committee headed by Dr. Martin Land. Because of
both technological and political security problems, this study has
been made without very much fanfare. However, its results were such
as to convince us that it is not really possible to construct camera

As you will immediately recognize, these proposals bear a resemblance to the spin-camera program which was cancelled in March of 1958. However, these new proposals do present somewhat different and possibly more attractive capabilities. In all cases they are linked to a Thor-boosted capability since we have made the companies concerned realize that an Atlas-boosted operational capability prior to the regularly programmed data-link system is out of the question.

As I have indicated previously, I would like to have your general reaction to these kinds of proposals.

D R A F T

8 Dec 58

25X1A

Ltr fr to Gen Schriever

This letter confirms and extends to some extent the remarks I recently made to you. It has become relatively common knowledge in portions of industry that the reconnaissance system proposed for Sentry involves the transmission by electrical means of information collected by a relatively long lived satellite. In general, it has not (been) difficult to deduce the time scales involved and the period within which we would have programmed a significant capability.

As a result of the above situation and as a result of the DISCOVERER announcement, we have been approached, rather privately, by a couple of concerns who would like to provide satellite payloads consisting of recoverable cameras. The basic notion is that they can fill a gap prior to the time at which the data-link system can be operational. They speak of other advantages which they believe attractive as well.

has aroused public sentiment in this country and abroad to the extent that its use will appear as a threatening and unpeaceful gesture. Most press speculation cultivates such fear. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us that we be more than usually careful in security provisions applicable to our SENTRY payloads.

The above thoughts are important to us at Lockheed not only from a national interest point of view but also for strictly corporate reasons. We can be proud of our performance in the past relative to especially secure programs. We wish to cultivate to the maximum extent possible a reputation for handling such programs with the greatest discretion and with a maximum degree of real security. As you know this is a difficult thing to do in the aviation industry and a reputation of this kind will be relatively unique and will aid us in further work of any kind requiring these qualifications.

Will you insure that these cautions are passed on to the key personnel in the X A branch?

As you and a limited number of other people are aware, there are some payloads in the DISCOVERER program which are quite sensitive and have to do with the military exploitation of space capabilities for objectives other than reconnaissance. We need to bear continuously in mind that we and the Air Force run the risk of having the DISCOVERER program drastically interfered with or reduced if idle speculation causes apprehension by those who have authorized the sensitive payloads that their real purpose may be politically unachievable through association in the public mind with a reconnaissance objective.

As to the SKENRY series, it is commonly accepted by the news media (although without official basis) that its purpose is reconnaissance. Your key people should recognize that the security problem surrounding the nation's first reconnaissance efforts with satellites are not only military but political. Even though we may have a technically perfected system, we may not be permitted to use it if idle speculation